

Marlborough Town Council



Full Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of Marlborough Town Council held Monday 26 June 2023 in the Court Room, Marlborough Town Hall at 7pm

PRESENT Councillor Nicholas Fogg Town Mayor
Councillor Kym-Marie Cleasby
Councillor Andrew Ross
Councillor Mark Cooper
Councillor Jane Davies
Councillor Caroline Thomas
Councillor James Sheppard
Councillor Mark Luson
Councillor Kelvyn Shantry
Councillor Martin Sims
Councillor Susannah O'Brien

ALSO

PRESENT Richard Spencer-Williams Town Clerk
Clare Harris Assistant Town Clerk
Neil Goodwin Marlborough News
3 Members of the public

PRAYERS

In the absence of the Mayor's Chaplain who is currently unwell, **The Town Mayor** opened the meeting with prayers.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Local Resident #1 – the resident raised his concerns of an ever-increasing issue in his neighbourhood resulting from confusion around similar addresses, leading to mis-directed post/parcels but more concerning of late, the incorrect issuing of utility bills. Utility companies are billing the wrong addresses and issuing demands for non-payment. The resident lives at 4 Cherry Orchard and quite recently a new development of apartments nearby has been named Cherry Orchard House, very similar and clearly very confusing, not least for the post office and delivery drivers but now a bigger issue around billing. The resident sought the support of the Town

Council as he is at a loss as to how to rectify the situation. Suggestions included contacting the landlord, land registry and/or the post office in the first instance. What3words could also be used to help with the delivery of parcels/post. It was generally agreed that the management company or agent for the new development would be the best first point of contact and there were some suggestions around the table as to who this might be.

Action – the Town Clerk will investigate this further and draft a letter to the appropriate person on behalf of the Town Council, seeking their support in rectifying this issue by altering the postal address for the new development going forward.

Local Resident #2 – the resident wished to voice his concerns over the poor state of Marlborough Leisure Centre, following years of underinvestment. He feels strongly that the benefits of leisure facilities cannot be underestimated and in his professional role as a GP he strongly advocates exercise in helping to manage physical and mental health. Its role is vital to the local community. He has seen recent adverts for a new centre manager and hopes that this could be an opportunity to ‘dangle a carrot’ and entice someone in who can look forward to managing a fit for purpose facility. His question to the council is What is the plan to stop this asset falling into irretrievable disrepair? Is there any firm intention to invest in Marlborough Leisure Centre?

The Town Mayor confirmed that this item is on the agenda, at the request of Councillor Davies, and will be discussed in more detail at Agenda Item 11.

Neil Goodwin, Marlborough News asked a question in relation to the proposed development at York Place and wanted to know if a date had been set for its discussion at the Eastern Area Planning Committee. Councillor Davies was unable to give a definite date for its discussion and decision as she has had no notification from Wiltshire Council that it is on a forthcoming agenda but did state that it might be a case that the decision deadline is deferred as is quite often the case.

CRIME AND DISORDER

There was no representative from Wiltshire Police present and no report provided.

QUESTIONS TO AND FROM WILTSHIRE COUNCILLORS

Councillor Cooper asked a question relating to car parking meters in Marlborough and whether Wiltshire Council have any plans to remove the facility for people to pay with cash/card at these meters. There are concerns that should an app only version replace the existing, this would have a detrimental impact on the town, preventing those without the App or the ability to use it, from visiting.

Councillor Thomas was pleased to be able to confirm to the contrary, that over the next 12 months Wiltshire Council will be replacing all its car parking meters with versions that have the facility for both card (contactless and inserting cards) and cash payments alongside the MI Permit app. This is a very costly exercise, but Wiltshire Council recognise the importance of this issue. It was noted that some meters across

the county will be removed completely but replacements will be relocated in more appropriate/more accessible locations where this is the case.

70/23 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from **Councillors Barrett-Morton, Farrell, and Hall.**

71/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

72/23 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor welcomed Councillor Sims to his first meeting.

Both the Town Mayor's Chaplain, Rev'd Canon Henry Pearson and fellow Councillor Noel Barrett-Morton are currently unwell. The Town Mayor extended his best wishes to both for a swift recovery to good health. The Town Mayor also informed members that former Town Councillor, Alex Light has sadly passed away. His funeral is taking place on 3rd July 2023. The Town Mayor will be attending, representing the Town Council on this sad occasion.

Members were reminded that there will be a town council election in the west ward on 27th July 2023, with a co-option for the east ward following on 18th September 2023, although this date may change to ensure maximum councillor attendance.

The Town Mayor extended grateful thanks to his Deputy, Councillor Kym-Marie Cleasby for stepping up, chairing meetings, and attending civic events in his absence. The Town Mayor had several pre-arranged trips abroad, which included Malta and Belgium, and took him away from Marlborough in his first month as Mayor. His trip to Belgium saw him leading a battlefields tour and he was thrilled to see a statue of Elsie Knocker and her colleague Marie Chisholm. Photos were shared with members and the Town Mayor explained more about Elsie's background and good work which led her to become the most decorated women from Marlborough. He was so thrilled to see such a fitting memorial in Ypres and would love to have a similar tribute to her, here in her hometown. Suggestions of a blue plaque or carving were put forward for consideration.

73/23 MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held 15 May 2023 were approved as a true record and signed by the Town Mayor.

74/23 ACTION LOG

The **Town Clerk** confirmed that whilst he has had discussions with Wiltshire Council in recent months regarding the MC&YC, he has not heard back from them since requesting a valuation figure and wondered if there had been a change in roles causing this delay. **Councillor Thomas** offered to follow this up at Wiltshire Council. **RESOLVED:** The **Town Clerk** to share his contact and communications with **Councillor Thomas.**

The **Town Clerk** confirmed that Homes4Wiltshire have agreed to attend a meeting of Full Council in September.

75/23 YEAR END FINANCE REPORT

Councillor Shantry asked for clarification as to why staffing costs had increased by 14% on the previous year (as shown on the Appendix 4). The Town Clerk explained that a new post was created within the grounds team and NJC pay increases could be attributed to these rising costs. Also, that there may have been an underspend in the previous year.

Councillor Shantry also asked why there was a decrease of 43% in the revenue figures (as shown on Appendix 4). The Town Clerk explained it could be due to such things as one off payments in the previous year's such as s106 funds, as opposed to direct income, but he did not have all the figures to hand to give a full explanation. He confirmed that he would provide a breakdown for Councillor Shantry following the meeting.

RESOLVED: The Year End Finance Report was noted.

76/23 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

RESOLVED: The Internal Audit Report was noted.

77/23 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2022/23 SECTION 1

RESOLVED: that the Annual Governance Statement at Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) was approved.

78/23 ANNUAL ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS 2022/23 SECTION 2

RESOLVED: that the Annual Accounting Statements at Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) was approved.

79/23 HERBERT LEAF CHARITY

Councillor Thomas explained that the guidance on the government website to assist with the process of setting up a Charitable Interest Organisation, stipulates the objects of the organisation, which must align with one of their categories. It was suggested therefore that this governance issue is resolved by the working party before applying for CIO status as it will otherwise be declined for re-submission until it is in accordance with their guidelines.

It was noted that following the resignation of Councillor Allen, the Town Mayor is the only councillor representative on this working party (alongside the Town Clerk) and more involvement from Council is needed to move this forward. As there was no interest at the meeting for new membership, it was suggested that outside parties could be invited to join this working group. It was suggested reaching out to those on the Cost-of-Living Crisis Working Party, made up of different partners and agencies, with a lot of combined experience and knowledge.

RESOLVED: That the objects should be kept as simple and straightforward as possible in accordance with the guidance on the Government website and that the **Town Clerk** will put a call out within his network of partners for new members to join this working party to move this forward.

80/23

STAFFING – TOWN ENGAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Councillor Cleasby, Chair of Staffing explained that the new title and job description for this post, formally Tourism Officer, identify the work which was already being undertaken by the original post holder but was not included within the job specification. There are no financial implications to the council and all terms and conditions would remain the same if approved.

Councillor Shantry suggested a couple of amendments to the job description as follows:

1. Under 'Outcomes', bullet point 2, Visitor Trails – include the river Kennet also.
2. Under 'Qualifications & Experience' move '*2 years' experience working in a political environment'* from Essential to Desirable.

RESOLVED: That the proposal to change the current Tourism Officer title and job description to Town Engagement & Development Officer is approved to include the suggested amendments above.

81/23

MARLBOROUGH LEISURE CENTRE

Councillor Davies opened discussions confirming that she has had concerns for some time over the declining condition of Marlborough Leisure Centre and has been actively lobbying Wiltshire Council for action. Some remedial repairs have been carried out, but considerable investment is required going forward. The following other comments were made:

- The Leisure Centre is vital to the community not just for physical health reasons but mental wellbeing also.
- Its location is more accessible than St John's and more available than Marlborough College facilities which are always booked up.
- We need guarantees that this facility, which is such a valuable community asset, is retained.
- Has usage dropped since the building fell into a poor state of repair?
- Wiltshire Council leisure facilities are back up to 83% usage post Covid.
- The closure of the café and creche had a massive impact on usage. Small level local investors could re-instate these facilities which would immediately enhance the current offer.
- Lots of residents chose to travel to Pewsey Leisure Centre, which has undergone massive investment, however many do not have the means to get there.
- Very little information is available in town or online about Marlborough Leisure Centre. The facility needs a relaunch and more publicity around the activities being offered.

- It is hoped that the appointment of a new manager, currently being advertised will bring a new lease of life to the centre.

Councillor Thomas confirmed that there are no plans within Wiltshire Council to close any of its leisure centres or libraries. They are actively investing in these facilities and work is underway.

It was suggested that the Town Council write to Wiltshire Council strongly supporting future investment in Marlborough Leisure Centre, which is a valuable community asset and vital to the needs, interests and health and wellbeing of the town.

RESOLVED: That the **Town Clerk** will draft and send a letter to Wiltshire Council as outlined above.

82/23 OUTSIDE BODIES

RESOLVED: That the proposal for Councillor Farrell to be elected as the council representative for school's liaison is approved.

83/23 SAVERNAKE FOREST

RESOLVED: That the **Town Clerk** writes to Forestry England once again, re-iterating the original invitation from the Town Council, as a primary stakeholder, to present at a Full Council meeting, with full and detailed information about their plans to manage Savernake Forest.

84/23 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

RESOLVED: To withdraw the Town Council's original request for a review of governance arrangements relating to the possible combination of Marlborough with the parishes of Preshute and Savernake.

85/23 MEMBERS QUESTION TIME

There were no questions arising.

86/23 COMMITTEE MINUTES

In accordance with para 3.1 of the Scheme of Delegation, Members noted the approved minutes of the following committee meetings: **Planning** – 24 April and 22 May 2023.

87/23 COMMON SEAL

Proposed by **Councillor Ross**, seconded by **Councillor Cooper** and

RESOLVED: that the Common Seal of Marlborough Town Council be affixed to all documents necessary to give effect to the decisions of the meeting

The meeting closed at 8.13pm

Signed: Date:
Town Mayor